

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

October 2022



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

Thank You!

Bruce Gustafson—General Supt.

As we shift from the busy summer schedule to the special event laden fall activities it is a good time to reflect on the 2022 operating season. When reviewing the latest metrics, 2022 has been a successful year. Barring some construction work at Excelsior our key operating metrics (the number of regular and charter riders) are back to pre-pandemic levels while operating fewer shifts. We have a very strong contingent of operators (117) including a large group of newly trained volunteers. Store and online sales continue to grow and exceed expectations.

Our Museum owes all of you a sincere “Thank you”, for the Museum could not exist and would not be as successful as it is without you. The strength and dedication of the volunteers showed through in some of the following 2022 accomplishments and planned activities.



- Graduated 21 new operators/ station agents includes: (CHSL) **Katie Barron, Jerry Betz, Ed Copeland, Pete Eide, Mary Ann Goens-Bradley, Mike Lerdahl, Bob Miller, Adi Penugonda, Steven Rush, John Stein, Zach Swenson**; (ESL) **Paula Callies, David Downs, Jerry Draeger, Joyce Draeger, Charles Karver, Eli Kessler, Ron Neitzel, Lynn Nelson, and Neill Schurter**. Thank you to the new volunteers and the training crew of **Bill Pekarna, Pat Cosgrove, Linda Ridlehuber, Karen Kertzman** and others.
- Thru Labor Day operated 2,700 volunteer hours. Special thanks to **Bill Way, Mike Buck, Rod Eaton, Jerry Betz, Bruce Allyn, Patrick Desbonnet, Bill Arends, Pat Cosgrove, Andy Jacob, Linda Ridlehuber, Bill Pekarna, Louis Hoffman, Aaron Isaacs, and Scott Heiderich** at CHSL and **Mike Buck, Denny Morrow, Karen Kertzman, Tim Gephart, Greg Thomas, Jim Kertzman, David Downs, and Ron Neitzel** at ESL who collectively contributed 50% of the total hours at their respective locations.
- The mechanical crews at Como-Harriet and Excelsior did a remarkable job in keeping the fleet mechanically sound and safe. The crews consist of: (CHSL) **John Prestholdt, Dennis Stephens, Mark Digre, Jim Willmore, Karl Jones, Russ Isbrandt, Tom Schramm, Mike Miller, Pete Connors, Nick Mainguy, and Pat Cosgrove**; (ESL) **Howie Melco, Scott Wardrope, Carl Floren, Steve Mages, Jim Kertzman, Scott Heiderich, Jerry Draeger, Mike Kimitch, Chris Hawver, Dave McCollum, and Dick Zawacki**.
- **Bill Arends** and **Karen Kertzman**, who manage the store sales at Como-Harriet and Excelsior have helped generate almost \$22,000 in sales which represents a significant part of the museum’s overall operating revenues.
- The new charter system managed by **Pat Cosgrove** (CHSL) and **Karen Kertzman** (ESL) have produced very strong 2022 activity.
- Looking forward to the balance of this year **Rod Eaton** and **Karen Kertzman** have a full slate of fall activities including the return of Santa Claus.

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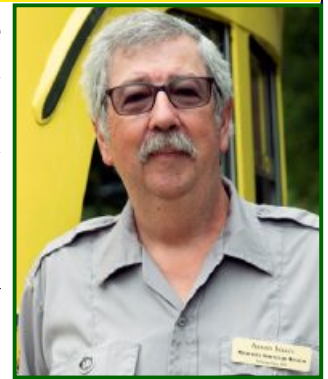
In closing, thank you all for your work and continued support for our Museum. It is through your commitment, hard work and dedication that our equipment and track operate well, our buildings and right-of-way look inviting, and our guests have an enjoyable experience. 🍀



From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Planning for the future. For quite awhile our museum has had a long range plan to move a single-truck streetcar from Excelsior to Lake Harriet. That in turn would free up space in the Excelsior car barn for the body of Fargo-Moorhead Birney No. 28. A whole series of other projects have to be completed for that to happen, and recently three of them have. The new CHSL tower car, the new “turbo” electric speeder and the realignment of Excelsior car barn Track 3, are done. The tower car is paired with a flat car carrying tools and equipment, plus a generator to power the scissors lift. The new speeder has successfully pulled this assemblage up the hill from 42nd Street to the car barn (see photo on the bottom of this page and on page 3). The next step is to move the tools and equipment to the new tower car.



The old tower car will either be scrapped or given to another trolley museum. That will free up space in the ready barn, the first step toward the possible move of a single truck streetcar to Lake Harriet and bringing the Birney body to the ESL car barn. However, other dominos have to fall before these things can be contemplated. The rest of the ESL car barn floor must be paved with concrete, and that will happen in 2023.

Next, Winona 10's failed motor, currently at Swiger Coil in Cleveland, must be repaired, reinstalled and successfully tested. Once the car is operational, we have to decide if it has the power and braking capability to run at Lake Harriet. If not, it may have to stay at ESL and car 78 may be the candidate to move.

Before a fourth streetcar can move to Lake Harriet, there are other problems to solve.

- First, storage shelves along the walls in the rear of the Ready Barn leave little room to squeeze between them and a parked streetcar. Do we need to relocate those shelves? If so, to where?
- Is the Ready Barn track long enough to provide sufficient spacing between the cars to minimize the risk of them bumping? Does the ready barn need to be lengthened?

As you can see, there are a lot of moving parts. We need to map out how this will happen. To that end I will organize a planning effort this winter to try to find the answers.

ESL investments. The winter planning effort must also address some needed improvements to the Excelsior car barn. Last year both furnaces failed. We got them running again, but it was costly. Do they need to be replaced? If so, when? The car barn is also due for a new roof. Like the furnaces, it can be delayed, but at some point it has to happen.

For a long time I've wanted to explore putting solar panels on the car barn roofs. Wouldn't it be great to boast of solar powered streetcars? However, it's a big investment and maybe beyond our reach. Nonetheless, I'm getting cost estimates so we can have that discussion. ☺

Here's our new tower wagon at Como-Harriet. The basic tower structure is mounted on an electrically powered lift. The motor raising the lift is powered by 110-volts, so where do we get the power when the tower wagon is out on the line? A generator on the smaller wagon right behind the tower wagon, with the new speeder right behind that with **Jim Willmore** at the controls. The old electric speeder is on the left. The safety railings on the new tower wagon raise up and lock into place for safety once the wagon is out on the line.

(Dennis Stephens photo)



MSM Photo Ops



Back several years ago, a switching accident in the Isaacs carbarn resulted in damage to the front of PCC No. 322. Here we see **Mike Miller** doing the repair work on the car's front. *(Aaron Isaacs photo)*



The garden at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line has never looked better. Many thanks to Master Gardener **Mary Porter** (left) and Museum volunteers **Ben Porter** and **Linda Ridlehuber**. The plants lean heavily toward Minnesota natives and other hardy varieties. Recently, our garden has been certified by the Master Gardeners of Hennepin County. Now garden lovers like **Kris Drew** and **Barbara Clarity** can lend a hand and be credited for the hours they spend with us. When you visit for a ride in an historic streetcar, take a moment to appreciate the work these folks have done.



Scouts are required to organize and lead a community service project as part of earning Eagle rank. MSM volunteer **Louis Hoffman** is a leader in Troop 1 in South Minneapolis and had a Scout looking for a project. The railings around the pedestrian underpass near the Linden Hills station at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line hadn't been painted for almost eighteen years. Liam, 15, a student at Roosevelt High School, took on the project and organized and led a group of Scouts, leaders, and family to take on the task. **Jerry Betz**, another MSM volunteer, was the liaison from the Museum. *(Caption & photo by Aaron Isaacs)*



Here's a better photo of CHSL's new wire repair train going out for a test run. **Pat Cosgrove** (Left) and **Jerry Betz** are seated in the new battery-powered "turbo speeder" with **Karl Jones** standing on the new tower wagon. **Bill Arends** is on the right admiring the new equipment. In the background on the left is the entrance to the "speeder barn." Note that this door is much smaller than the regular carbarn doors. The new tower wagon was built with the working platform on a powered lift so the tower can be lowered from working height and fit through the smaller door. *(Aaron Isaacs photo)*



Drainage at the front of the Excelsior carbarn has been a problem for years. A heavy rain would result in water and mud running into the "ready barn" portion of the carbarn. The problem was fixed recently by a new drain pipe installed to take the water away from the front of the carbarn. The ESL carbarn crew on this project were **Scott Heiderich**, **Steve Mages**, **Scott Wardrope**, **Howie Melco**, **Jerry Draeger** and **Mike Kimitch**. *(Karen Kertzman photo)*

What's Happening?

- October 15 & 16-----CHSL—Farmer Jan & Ken's **PUMPKIN PATCH**
- October 21-----CHSL **GRAVEYARD GHOST STORIES** trolley (SOLD OUT)
- October 22 -----CHSL **Transylvania Trolley** at CHSL
- October 23-----ESL **TROLLEYWEEN**
- October 28-----CHSL **THE LATE SHOW—THE CARBARN MURDERS**
- October 29-----CHSL **STREETCAR NAMED EXPIRE**
- October 29-----ESL **TRICK O' TREAT** in Excelsior
- Nov 26&27, Dec 3&4-----CHSL **Holly Trolley**
- November 25, 26 & 27----ESL's **Jingle Bells Trolley**
and December 2, 3 & 4 -Ditto-
- December 3-----CHSL's **Vinternatt**



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 INFO AND THE TIMES FOR THESE
 GREAT HOLIDAY EVENTS:
WWW.TROLLEYRIDE.ORG**

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



The Minnesota Streetcar Museum is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization with the mission to preserve and communicate to the public the experience of Minnesota's electric street and interurban railway history. To accomplish this mission the Museum operates historic streetcars at two demonstration railways.

**COMO-HARRIET STREETCAR LINE
 Excelsior Streetcar Line**

For more information on our Museum, our collection of historic streetcars and our demonstration railways, visit our website: www.TrolleyRide.org

The museum's business address and telephone number are:

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Streetcar **CURRENTS
 October—2022**

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
 Bill Graham—Distribution

Streetcar **CURRENTS** is a newsletter published for the members and friends of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum.

Deadline for submitting items for the next edition of the **Streetcar **CURRENTS**** is November 20, 2022.

Please send items to the editor **Jim Vaitkunas** at the following address:
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At ESL there have been several projects designed to improve the area both inside and outside of the ESL carbarn. A major project just completed is the realignment of ESL carbarn track #3. In this photo, the contractor is using a Bobcat loader to gently nudge the track into proper position.

(Karen Kertzman photo)



When Mesaba Railway No.10 was built in 1915 it had a hot water heating system. The coal fired heater warmed water as it circulated through tubes inside. Convection pushed the heated water through a system of pipes around the baseboards of the car's interior walls, heating the car. Mesaba No.10 was recently moved to track 2 in the Excelsior Streetcar Line carbarn. For the first time in years we had easy access to the original Peter Smith heater. At the base of the heater we found pieces of coal. How long had these pieces been sitting there? Were they left from 1927 when Mesaba No.10 was taken out of service? Or were they from the 1970s, left by Mr. Gregorich from the forty-five years he used the car body as his home near the town of Cotton, Minnesota? We may never know. But it's an interesting find and a big part of the history of Mesaba Railway No. 10.

(Caption: Aaron Isaacs & Bill Graham, photo: Karen Kertzman)



Streetcar **CURRENTS Winter Publication Schedule**

The **Streetcar **CURRENTS****, is now in its winter publication schedule. You'll receive the **Streetcar **CURRENTS**** every other month starting with the November-December 2022 issue. Publication date for the next issue will be on or about December 1st. If you don't receive your issue on or shortly after that date please contact me at: jvaitkunas@msn.com